



Florida Department of Environmental Protection

Marjory Stoneman Douglas Building
3900 Commonwealth Boulevard
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-3000

Rick Scott
Governor

Carlos Lopez-Cantera
Lt. Governor

Noah Valenstein
Secretary

April 27, 2018

Scott Pruitt, Commissioner
Environmental Protection Agency
William Jefferson Clinton Building
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20460

Commissioner Pruitt:

As Secretary of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), I'm honored to work alongside 3,000 knowledgeable, talented and committed employees who work tirelessly each and every day to protect Florida's unique wetlands and other environmental treasures. This includes our highly qualified regulatory team of hydrologists, geologists, environmental scientists and engineers who are located in regulatory offices across the state to provide localized expertise on the unique environmental features and conditions of Florida's diverse natural resources.

As you know, the federal Clean Water Act recognizes the importance of allowing states to utilize their localized expertise to enhance protection of their water resources by assuming administration of federal programs. Recently, the Florida Legislature passed a bill that allows DEP to begin the process to enhance the protection of Florida's wetlands by having the same statewide team of environmental experts who are already issuing Florida's robust wetlands protection program also administer the similar federal 404 program. With nine regulatory district and satellite offices located in communities around the state, we believe we are uniquely positioned to engage Florida's stakeholders and protect the natural resources we hold dear.

We look forward to beginning the assumption process, which includes a thorough review by our federal partners as well as a robust public engagement process for the citizens of Florida. I know both the EPA and the Corps share our commitment to protecting the environment and engaging the public. A key element to the assumption process is providing clear guidelines for the federal and state parties to follow, which is why we support the use of the majority recommendation of the Assumable Waters Subcommittee, as it provides clarity and consistency for the assumption process. To that end, we appreciate the Corps' recent decision to pause rulemaking for the Determination of Navigable Waters to avoid potential confusion with the federal assumption review.

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Letter to Commissioner Pruitt
April 27, 2018
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I'm excited to work together with partners in our communities and with local and federal agencies to empower Floridians to more easily engage in the protection of the natural resources in their communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a long, sweeping horizontal stroke with a diagonal line crossing it near the center.

Noah Valenstein
Secretary

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

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TALLAHASSEE, FL 32399-3000

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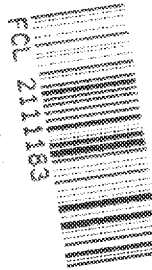
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